
IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF UTAH

JEFFREY J. DANIELS,

Plaintiff,

v.

UTAH STATE PRISON et al.,

Defendants.

**ORDER TO CURE DEFICIENT
COMPLAINT & MEMORANDUM
DECISION**

Case No. 2:16-CV-1229-TC

District Judge Tena Campbell

Plaintiff, inmate Jeffrey J. Daniels, filed this *pro se* civil rights suit, *see* 42 U.S.C.S. § 1983 (2019), *in forma pauperis*, *see* 28 *id.* § 1915. The Court now screens the Complaint and orders Plaintiff to file an amended complaint to cure deficiencies before further pursuing claims.¹

COMPLAINT’S DEFICIENCIES

Complaint:

- (a) does not affirmatively link Defendants to civil-rights violations.
- (b) appears to inappropriately allege civil-rights violations on a respondeat-superior theory.

¹ The screening statute reads:

- (a) Screening.—The court shall review . . . a complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity.
- (b) Grounds for dismissal.—On review, the court shall identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint—
 - (1) is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or
 - (2) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.

(c) is perhaps supplemented with claims from documents filed since the Complaint, which claims should be included in an amended complaint, if filed, and will not be treated further by the Court unless properly included.

(d) does not state a proper legal-access claim (see below).

(e) alleges possible constitutional violations resulting in injuries that appear to be prohibited by 42 U.S.C.S. § 1997e(e) (2018), which reads, "No Federal civil action may be brought by a prisoner . . . for mental or emotional injury suffered while in custody without a prior showing of a physical injury or the commission of a sexual act."

(f) inappropriately asserts a retaliation claim. (See below.)

(g) raises issues of classification change in a way that does not support a cause of action. (See below.)

(h) inappropriately alleges a constitutional right to a grievance process. *Boyd v. Werholtz*, 443 F. App'x 331, 332 (10th Cir. 2011) (unpublished) ("[T]here is no independent constitutional right to state administrative grievance procedures. Nor does the state's voluntary provision of administrative grievance process create a liberty interest in that process.").

(i) improperly names Utah State Prison as a defendant, though it is not an independent legal entity that can sue or be sued.

(j) has claims apparently regarding current confinement; however, the complaint was apparently not drafted with the help of contract attorneys.

GUIDANCE FOR PLAINTIFF

Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires a complaint to contain "(1) a short and plain statement of the grounds for the court's jurisdiction . . .; (2) a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief; and (3) a demand for the relief sought." Rule 8's requirements mean to guarantee "that defendants enjoy fair notice of what the claims against them are and the grounds upon which they rest." *TV Commc'ns Network, Inc. v ESPN, Inc.*, 767 F. Supp. 1062, 1069 (D. Colo. 1991).

Pro se litigants are not excused from complying with these minimal pleading demands.

"This is so because a pro se plaintiff requires no special legal training to recount the facts

surrounding his alleged injury, and he must provide such facts if the court is to determine whether he makes out a claim on which relief can be granted." *Hall v. Bellmon*, 935 F.2d 1106, 1110 (10th Cir. 1991). Moreover, it is improper for the Court "to assume the role of advocate for a pro se litigant." *Id.* Thus, the Court cannot "supply additional facts, [or] construct a legal theory for plaintiff that assumes facts that have not been pleaded." *Dunn v. White*, 880 F.2d 1188, 1197 (10th Cir. 1989).

Plaintiff should consider the following points before refiling Plaintiff's complaint. First, the revised complaint must stand entirely on its own and shall not refer to, or incorporate by reference, any portion of the original complaint or any other document. *See Murray v. Archambo*, 132 F.3d 609, 612 (10th Cir. 1998) (stating amended complaint supersedes original).

Second, the complaint must clearly state what each defendant--typically, a named government employee--did to violate Plaintiff's civil rights. *See Bennett v. Passic*, 545 F.2d 1260, 1262-63 (10th Cir. 1976) (stating personal participation of each named defendant is essential allegation in civil-rights action). "To state a claim, a complaint must 'make clear exactly *who* is alleged to have done *what* to *whom*.'" *Stone v. Albert*, No. 08-2222, slip op. at 4 (10th Cir. July 20, 2009) (unpublished) (emphasis in original) (quoting *Robbins v. Oklahoma*, 519 F.3d 1242, 1250 (10th Cir. 2008)).

Third, Plaintiff cannot name an individual as a defendant based solely on his or her supervisory position. *See Mitchell v. Maynard*, 80 F.2d 1433, 1441 (10th Cir. 1996) (stating supervisory status alone does not support § 1983 liability).

Fourth, grievance denial alone with no connection to “violation of constitutional rights alleged by plaintiff, does not establish personal participation under § 1983.” *Gallagher v. Shelton*, No. 09-3113, 2009 U.S. App. LEXIS 25787, at *11 (10th Cir. Nov. 24, 2009).

• Legal Access

As Plaintiff fashions his amended complaint, he should also keep in mind that it is well-recognized that prison inmates "have a constitutional right to 'adequate, effective, and meaningful' access to the courts and that the states have 'affirmative obligations' to assure all inmates such access." *Ramos v. Lamm*, 639 F.2d 559, 583 (10th Cir. 1980). In *Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817 (1977), the Supreme Court expounded on the obligation to provide access to the Courts by stating "the fundamental constitutional right of access to the courts requires prison authorities to assist inmates in the preparation and filing of meaningful legal papers by providing prisoners with adequate law libraries or adequate assistance from persons trained in the law." *Id.* at 828 (footnote omitted & emphasis added).

However, to successfully assert a claim for denial of legal access a plaintiff must allege not only inadequacy of the library or legal help but also "that the denial of legal resources hindered [Plaintiff's] efforts to pursue a nonfrivolous claim." *Penrod v. Zavaras*, 84 F.3d 1399, 1403 (10th Cir. 1996) (emphasis added); *Carper v. Deland*, 54 F.3d 613, 616 (10th Cir. 1995). In other words, Plaintiff must show "that any denial or delay of access to the court prejudiced him in pursuing litigation." *Treff v. Galetka*, 74 F.3d 191, 194 (10th Cir. 1996). Moreover, the non-frivolous litigation involved must be "habeas corpus or civil rights actions regarding current confinement." *Carper*, 54 F.3d at 616; accord *Lewis v. Casey*, 518 U.S. 343, 353-55 (1996).

• Retaliation

"It is well-settled that '[p]rison officials may not retaliate against or harass an inmate because of the inmate's exercise of his right of access to the courts.'" *Gee v. Pacheco*, 627 F.3d 1178, 1189 (10th Cir. 2010) (quoting *Smith v. Maschner*, 899 F.2d 940, 947 (10th Cir. 1990)). To show retaliation, Plaintiff must prove three elements: (1) Plaintiff was involved in "constitutionally protected activity"; (2) Defendants' behavior injured Plaintiff in a way that "would chill a person of ordinary firmness from continuing to engage in that activity"; and (3) Defendants' injurious behavior was "substantially motivated" as a reaction to Plaintiff's constitutionally protected conduct. *Shero v. City of Grove*, 510 F.3d 1196, 1203 (10th Cir. 2007).

• Classification Change

An inmate's classification change does not necessarily mean that prison administrators were deliberately indifferent to conditions with a substantial risk of serious harm. *Se Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994). Nor is it, per se, "atypical [of] ... the ordinary incidents of prison life." *See Adams v. Negron*, No. 03-1110, 94 Fed. Appx. 676, 2004 U.S. App. LEXIS 3558, at *4 (10th Cir. Feb. 25, 2004) (quoting *Sandin, v. Conner*, 515 U.S. 472, 484 (1995) (unpublished) (holding placement in highly structured, restrictive prison housing unit not deliberate indifference). Rather, classification change "is the sort of [issue] that inmates should reasonably anticipate receiving at some point in their incarceration." *Hewitt v. Helms*, 459 U.S. 460, 468 (1983).

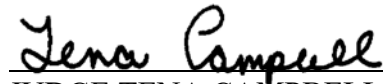
ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

- (1) Plaintiff must within thirty days cure the Complaint's deficiencies noted above.
- (2) The Clerk's Office shall mail Plaintiff the Pro Se Litigant Guide with a form civil-rights complaint for Plaintiff to use should Plaintiff choose to file an amended complaint.
- (3) If Plaintiff fails to timely cure the above deficiencies according to this Order's instructions, this action will be dismissed without further notice.

DATED this 29th day of April, 2019.

BY THE COURT:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tena Campbell", is written over a horizontal line.

JUDGE TENA CAMPBELL
United States District Court